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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 001078

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S CARSON, NSC FOR SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR  
AFRICA GAVIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2039  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [KE](#)

SUBJECT: A/S CARSON AND NSC SENIOR DIRECTOR GAVIN'S MEETING WITH  
SPEAKER MARENDE

REF: NAIROBI 848

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger for reasons 1.4 (B  
and  
D)

SUMMARY

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11. (C) Assistant Secretary for African Affairs (A/S) Johnnie Carson and National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for Africa Michelle Gavin met with the Speaker of the Kenyan Parliament, Peter Marende, on May 12. A/S Carson told Marende that his visit was meant to underscore the enormous friendship and long-standing partnership between the United States and Kenya. However, Carson also emphasized concern in Washington that efforts to implement the reform agenda were beginning to fray. The U.S. is looking for progress on key issues, Carson commented. A/S Carson praised the Speaker for his contribution to encouraging dialogue and reconciliation. The United States, as a friend of Kenya, wants to be supportive and helpful to prevent a return to instability and violence in Kenya, Carson said. NSC Senior Director for Africa Gavin noted Marende's positive contributions to Kenya's political situation. She also commented that President Obama is deeply concerned with events in Kenya. Gavin relayed the President's belief that political gridlock threatens Kenya's chances to make progress on the reform agenda. Gavin also conveyed a message from the President that there will be no "business as usual" with actors who obstruct the reform agenda or who advocate a return to violence. Speaker Marende acknowledged the strong U.S.-Kenya friendship and the Ambassador's efforts to bring about reconciliation during the post-election crisis. Marende noted that the grand coalition government is transitory and that the two sides often need to be encouraged to do negotiate. According to Marende, "it's up to our leaders to provide leadership." He concluded by stressing the importance of continuing U.S. support to Kenya.  
End Summary.

Friendship and Concern

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12. (C) Assistant Secretary for African Affairs (A/S) Johnnie Carson and National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director for Africa Michelle Gavin met with the Speaker of the Kenyan Parliament, Peter Marende, on May 12. A/S Carson told Marende that his visit was meant to underscore the enormous friendship and longstanding partnership between the United States and Kenya. However, Carson noted that his visit was also meant to emphasize concern in Washington that efforts to implement the reform agenda were beginning to fray. The U.S. is looking for progress on key issues and for genuine reconciliation, according to Carson. The Assistant Secretary praised the Speaker for the constructive role he has played in bringing

the parties together to conduct the business of Parliament. Referring to the Speaker's recent decision to assume leadership of Parliament's House Business Commission in the absence of Government agreement on a single nominee (Reftel), A/S Carson complimented Marende's political courage and ability to find solutions that do not aggravate the political situation. A/S Carson urged Marende to continue to use his good offices to unite the parties. The United States, as a friend of Kenya, wants to be supportive and helpful to prevent a return to instability and violence in Kenya, Carson said.

#### President Obama Deeply Concerned

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¶3. (C) National Security Council Senior Director for Africa Michelle Gavin stated that she had spoken with President Obama about Kenya before departing Washington. Gavin told Marende that the President is deeply concerned with events in Kenya. Gavin relayed the President's belief that political gridlock threatens Kenya's chances to make progress on the reform agenda. Gavin stated that the U.S. wants to be a good partner, but that we needed to signal our concern about the current situation. Gavin noted that President Obama asked her to convey the message that there will be no "business as usual" with actors who obstruct the reform agenda or who advocate a return to violence.

#### Appreciation for U.S. Efforts

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¶4. (C) Speaker Marende acknowledged the strong U.S.-Kenya

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friendship and also the Ambassador's efforts to bring about reconciliation during the post-election crisis. Marende was please to hear that President Obama, "stands by and with" Kenya, but that the two partners in the Coalition Government must be encouraged to negotiate. Marende commented that the Coalition Government is transitory, and issues need to be negotiated continually. Marende told A/S Carson that his decision to take over the temporary leadership of Parliament's House Business Committee was motivated by a desire to force the government to ensure that decisions are reached by consensus. Marende admitted that the deadlock over the leadership of the House Business Committee had contributed to an increase in tensions and that some regions were prepared to fight over the matter. Marende expressed satisfaction that his decision had helped defuse tensions. Marende state that his decision had also unlocked Parliament to do business and he noted that progress is being made on implementing the reform agenda. He stressed the importance of continuing U.S. support to Kenya. Marende acknowledged that Kenya can do better, but that, "it's up to our leaders to provide leadership."

¶5. (U) This cable has been cleared by A/S Carson and NSC Senior Director for Africa Gavin.

RANNEBERGER